

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4, 6, 10, 13 and 15-19 have been amended. Claim 14 has been canceled.

The Applicant thanks the Examiner for noting that claims 4-7 and 14-18 recite allowable subject matter.

Claim Objections

Claims 10, 13 and 19 have been amended to address the objections as suggested by the Examiner. Thus, those claims are now in condition for allowance.

Claims 11-17 and 20 were objected to as being dependent from one of claims 10, 13 and 19 and now also should be allowable.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. 102/103

Independent claims 1, 10 and 19 have been placed in condition for allowance by amendment to recite an allowable feature of claim 18.

The Examiner noted that an allowable feature of the claim 18 is “forming a dummy pattern adjacent the output bit groups and having a shape equivalent to the output regions.” The Applicant notes that it is the subject matter of each claim as a whole that is patentable, not any particular feature recited in the claim. The Applicant does not concede that the reasons for allowance given by the Examiner are the only reasons that make the claim allowable.

However independent claims 1, 10 and 19 have been amended to recite the allowable feature of claim 18 noted by the Examiner. Thus, claims 1, 10 and 19 also should be allowable. The Applicant respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections of those claims.

Claims 2-3, 11-13 and 20 depend from one of claims 1, 10 and 19 and should be allowable for at least the same reasons.

Miscellaneous

Claim 4 has been amended to delete the allowable feature now recited in claim 1, from which it depends.

Claims 6, 16 and 18 have been amended to correct an error in syntax by deleting the word "to" following the word "adjacent."

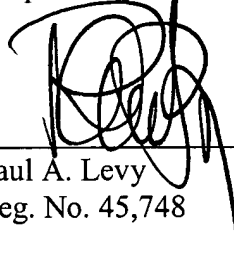
Claims 15-17 have been amended to correct the dependencies resulting from the cancellation of claim 14.

Conclusion

Claims 4-7 and 14-18 are allowable, as noted in the Office Action. Claims 1-3, 10-13 and 19-20 have been placed in condition for allowance. Thus, all of the pending claims are in condition for allowance.

The Applicant does not believe that any fees are due. However, please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,



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